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ABSTRACT

Designed to help teachers promote a teacher-parent partnership process, this manual describes the Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS) program in language arts, science, and health. The manual covers the TIPS Interactive Homework Process, focusing on overcoming obstacles, TIPS activities, the process of informing parents, and students' roles. A detailed description about ways to develop, implement, and evaluate a TIPS homework project is provided, and answers to 10 commonly asked questions that teachers and parents ask about TIPS interactive homework, and other types of parent involvement, are given. Appendices include descriptions of sample activities for language arts, science, and health, and a summary of research results on parent involvement. Ordering information for TIPS prototype activities in elementary math and science, and middle school language arts, science, and health, is included. (MM)

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TIPS

Teachers Involve Parents In Schoolwork

MANUAL FOR TEACHERS

LANGUAGE ARTS AND SCIENCE/HEALTH INTERACTIVE HOMEWORK IN THE MIDDLE GRADES

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Summary:

Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS) Language Arts and Science/Health

Educators are increasingly aware of the importance of involving parents in the education of their children. Research shows that parent involvement improves student achievement. When parents are involved, children do better in school. Parental encouragement and assistance contribute to students' higher achievement, report card grades, better attitudes, and higher aspirations.

Some families already are partners with their children's schools and encourage their children to work hard as students. However, most families say that they need information and guidance from schools in order to know how to help their children at home. As children move from one grade to the next, families need information and assistance to understand the schools and to know how to talk with, monitor, encourage, and guide their children as students.

Teachers play a critical role in whether families are involved in their children's education each year. By providing useful information and skills on how to help at home, teachers can encourage parents to talk with and work with their children. When parents are assisted in this way, they become more aware of their children's school program, interact with their children more, and reinforce the teachers' goals for better schoolwork. When parents are knowledgeable partners, students see that their teachers and parents are communicating about schoolwork, and they become more aware of their parents' abilities to talk about schoolwork and school decisions at home.

Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork. Teachers have helped design, implement, and test a teacher-parent partnership process called Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS). With TIPS, any teacher can regularly, and relatively easily, help all families stay informed and involved in their children's learning activities at home, and help all students complete homework that should promote greater success in school.

TIPS features **homework** assignments that **require** students to **talk to someone** at home about something **interesting** that they are **learning in class**. TIPS homework is the students' responsibility, requires interaction about something that is really interesting, and enables students to share with parents things they are learning in class. TIPS helps solve some important problems with homework:

- It helps all families become involved, not just the few who know how to discuss math or science or other subjects.
- It makes homework the students' responsibility and does not ask parents to "teach" subjects or skills that they are not prepared to teach.
- It asks students to share and enjoy their work, ideas, and progress with their families.
- It allows families to comment and request other information from teachers in a section for home-to-school communication.

With TIPS, homework becomes a three-way partnership involving students, families, and teachers.

Families immediately recognize and appreciate the efforts of teachers to keep them informed and involved. The TIPS activities keep school on the agenda at home so that children know that their families believe schoolwork is important and worth talking about. Students need as much guidance as parents about how to keep their families aware of and involved in the work they do in school. Over time, as TIPS is used each year, students get the idea that their teachers want their families to know about what they are learning and participate in homework.

Prototype materials for language arts and science/health (grades 6 and 7) are available, along with a manual that outlines the responsibilities of teachers, students, and parents to implement the program. Prototype materials are also available for math and science for the elementary grades.

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TIPS

Teachers Involve Parents In Schoolwork

FOR THE ELEMENTARY GRADES

☐ **Manual for Teachers: Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS)* Math and Science Interactive Homework in the Elementary Grades.** (Revised 1992)
Joyce L. Epstein and Karen Clark Salinas.
(P-6-1, $6.00)

This manual is designed to help teachers understand and implement the TIPS Math or Science process in the elementary grades. It provides information on how to use interactive TIPS homework in math and science and how to orient parents to the TIPS process. TIPS can be adapted for use with all elementary curricula and learning objectives.

Prototype Activities for TIPS Math and Science:

☐	TIPS Math, Kindergarten	(P-6-2-Km)	$10.00
☐	TIPS Math, Grade 1	(P-6-2-1m)	$ 6.00
☐	TIPS Math, Grade 2	(P-6-2-2m)	$ 6.00
☐	TIPS Math, Grade 3	(P-6-2-3m)	$ 9.00
☐	TIPS Math, Grade 4	(P-6-2-4m)	$ 6.00
☐	TIPS Math, Grade 5	(P-6-2-5m)	$ 6.00
☐	TIPS Science, Grade 3	(P-6-3)	$ 3.00

(Note: TIPS Math and Science activities require the Manual for Teachers, P-6-1).

FOR THE MIDDLE GRADES

☐ **Manual for Teachers: Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS) Language Arts and Science/Health Interactive Homework in the Middle Grades.** (1992)
Joyce L. Epstein, Vivian E. Jackson, Karen Clark Salinas,
with Language Arts and Science/Health Teachers
(P-6-8, $6.00)

This manual is designed to help teachers understand and implement the TIPS Language Arts and Science/Health process in the middle grades. It provides information on how to use interactive TIPS homework in language arts and science/health and how to orient parents to the TIPS process. TIPS can be adapted for use with all middle grades curricula and learning objectives.

Prototype Activities for TIPS Language Arts and Science/Health:

☐	TIPS Language Arts (Grade 6)	(P-6-9-L6)	$8.00
☐	TIPS Science/Health (Grade 6)	(P-6-10-S6)	$8.00
☐	TIPS Language Arts (Grade 7)	(P-6-11-L7)	$8.00
☐	TIPS Science/Health (Grade 7)	(P-6-12-S7)	$8.00

(Note: TIPS Language Arts and Science/Health activities require the Manual for Teachers, P-6-8).

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* When ordering materials, note that one school's grade 5 curriculum may be another school's grade 6 curriculum; you may want to order more than one grade level to match your school's curriculum.

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TEACHERS INVOLVE PARENTS IN SCHOOLWORK (TIPS)

Language Arts and Science/Health Interactive Homework in the Middle Grades

If enough studies show the same result, you begin to believe it. That is how it is with school and family partnerships. Research shows that parent involvement improves student achievement, attitudes, homework, report card grades, and aspirations. Surveys of parents show that most families want to be able to talk with, monitor, encourage, and guide their children as students, but they say they need more information from the schools about how to help their children at home.

Studies also show that when teachers guide involvement and interaction, more parents become involved in ways that benefit their children. For example, when teachers frequently use practices to involve families in reading, students gain more in reading than do similar students whose teachers do not involve families. This suggests an important connection between parent involvement in particular subjects and student success in those subjects. It also shows the important roles teachers play in helping families become involved in schoolwork at home.

There are other benefits to school and family partnerships. When parents are assisted by the schools, they become more knowledgeable about their children's education and they interact with their children more. Children see that their parents and teachers communicate. They become more aware that they can talk to someone at home about schoolwork and school decisions.

Based on research that links teachers' practices of involving families with more success for students, we developed a process that enables teachers to do this easily -- Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS). (See research summary in Appendix C.)

This manual describes the TIPS process in language arts and science/health and how to implement a TIPS Homework Project. Other TIPS manuals and prototype activities are available for elementary level educators. A list of research reports and materials is also available.

THE TIPS INTERACTIVE HOMEWORK PROCESS

Of all the types of involvement, the one that most parents want to know about is: **How do I help my own child at home?** This request is at the top of parents' wish lists, but this type of involvement often is difficult for schools to organize. It requires every teacher at every grade level to communicate with families about how to work and interact with their children on learning at home.

To meet this need, teachers helped design, implement, and test a process called Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS) for interactive homework. With TIPS, any teacher can help all families stay informed and involved in their children's learning activities at home. With TIPS, students complete homework that should promote their success in school.

TIPS activities are **homework** assignments that **require** students to **talk to someone** at home about **something interesting** that they are **learning in class**. TIPS helps solve some important problems with homework:

- It enables all families to become involved, not just those who already know how to discuss language arts, science/health, or other subjects.
- It makes homework the students' responsibility; parents are not asked to "teach" subjects or skills.
- TIPS requires students to share their work, ideas, and progress with their families.
- It asks families to comment on their children's work and to request other information from teachers in a section for home-to-school communication.

With TIPS, homework becomes a three-way partnership involving students, families, and teachers.

Overcoming Obstacles

School and family connections are not exactly the same in the middle grades as in the lower grades. As students become more independent and self-directed, relationships and patterns of interaction change. These changes cause four problems that can weaken partnerships between middle grade schools and families. TIPS can overcome these obstacles:

Jump hurdle 1: Homework should NOT always be done alone. Some teachers believe that all homework should be completed in a quiet place, away from the family or other people. This type of homework allows students to practice what was taught in class, to study for a quiz, or to complete other work *on their own*. While SOME homework serves these purposes, OTHER homework should fulfill other goals. TIPS homework -- once a week in language arts, twice a month in science/health, or other subjects -- is designed specifically to keep students and their families talking about schoolwork at home.

Jump hurdle 2: Just any homework won't do. Some homework is pretty boring; it requires students' time but not much thinking. TIPS activities must be challenging and engaging -- the type of homework that students will want to explain and share with their families. TIPS includes higher level thinking skills and interactions with family members that make students think, write, gather information, collect suggestions, explain, demonstrate, draw, sketch or construct things, and conduct other interactive activities with parents and other family members at home.

Jump hurdle 3: Teachers want students to talk about schoolwork at home. Some students believe that their teachers do not want them to talk with their families about what they are learning in school. The teachers, of course, say differently. This problem is solved when teachers make it very clear to students that they are expected to talk about school and schoolwork with their parents and family. Students must hear that the teachers understand that:

- families want to know what their children are learning
- communicating, showing, and sharing with families what is learned in class improves students' own understanding
- teachers want families to know how students are increasing their skills and understanding and preparing for the future

TIPS facilitates these interactions because they are built into the homework designs.

Jump hurdle 4: Parents are not expected to "teach" school skills. Some parents feel they should not talk with their early adolescents if they do not know much about the school subject. This problem is solved in TIPS by making it very clear that parents are not expected to "teach" the skills covered in the assignments. Rather, based on early adolescents' growing independence, the students are in charge of their own homework, including TIPS homework. They are asked to complete the assignments and to guide the interactions with members of their families in discussions, interviews, and other communications.

TIPS Activities

TIPS prototype activities are examples that teachers can use to design homework that matches the learning objectives they set for their students. Some of the examples may be useful just as they are. But, most teachers will use the examples to help them design their own TIPS activities.

After several years of development, TIPS now can be easily adopted or adapted. Teachers who see the activities usually say, "I can do that!" That is exactly the reaction that will help every teacher in every grade level and every subject design interactive homework for their students and families.

TIPS Language Arts provides a format for students to share what they are learning in language arts. Activities include writing skills, grammar, words and their meanings, and linking reading and writing. The TIPS format requires students to communicate -- speak, read, write, interview, and listen -- with family members.

TIPS Science/Health provides a format for students to conduct and discuss hands-on "lab" or data collection activities related to the science topics they study in class. These hands-on science activities help students and their families see that science is enjoyable, enriching, and part of every day life.

In science, it is important that TIPS activities require only inexpensive or no-cost materials that are readily available at home. Special equipment, if it is ever needed, should be provided by the school. The TIPS Science/Health activities include a brief letter to parents explaining the topic. Then, the activities outline objectives and materials and provide space for lab reports or data charts, challenges, discussion questions, conclusions, and home-to-school communications.

Other subjects. Language arts and science/health activities have been designed for the middle grades. Math and science examples are available for the elementary level. The prototype activities give examples that can be adapted to other subjects and other grade levels. For example, the middle grades language arts and reading examples should give elementary language arts teachers some ideas of how to design interactive TIPS language arts and reading for the elementary grades. TIPS Math for the elementary grades may give some ideas about a format for middle grades math homework. The prototypes also should suggest ideas to social studies teachers who want to design interactive homework.

Informing Parents

TIPS activities are homework assignments that include interactions and communications with families. They are regularly scheduled activities (e.g., weekly or every two weeks) so that students and families become familiar with the TIPS process and so that information about schoolwork continues to flow throughout the school year.

Parents receive information about TIPS in several ways:

1. **The principal and/or teachers** send letters to parents during the summer or at the start of the school year informing them about the program.

2. **Teachers** orient parents at grade level meetings that are held at the beginning of the year, including the first "open house" or "back to school" meeting.
   - Parents may be shown TIPS activities on an overhead and offered ideas of how to interact with their children to build students' self esteem and positive attitudes toward homework and schoolwork.
   - Parents are informed that they are <u>not</u> expected to teach their early adolescents specific skills, but rather to discuss the students' work, and to encourage them to complete and discuss their homework, schoolwork, and ideas.

3. **Teachers** provide other written communications and telephone conversations to inform and remind parents about the project. These communications help teachers and parents discuss participation on TIPS activities and other learning activities with early adolescents.

4. **Students** are reminded of the importance of involving their families on each TIPS assignment and the importance of completing their homework.

5. **On-going contacts** are made by teachers, principals, and project leaders to keep families informed about the project and the importance of their participation.

Students' Key Roles

Students are responsible for completing their homework and for guiding the interactions with their families in each assignment. The students can do their part **only** if teachers prepare them for the added responsibility of communicating with their families about homework. Thus, the key roles of students depend on new approaches by teachers to TIPS homework.

The teacher should go over each assignment in class so that the students fully understand the activity. This includes explaining the importance of involving a family member in the work. Students need to hear that their teachers want them to exchange information with their parents and other members of their family and to talk about what they are learning in language arts, science/health, or other subjects.

DEVELOPING A TIPS HOMEWORK PROJECT

TIPS can be developed in three clear steps:

- Teachers work together to design and develop TIPS interactive homework assignments to match their own curricula and learning objectives.
- Teachers use the assignments with students and families during the school year.
- Revisions are made based on feedback from students, parents, and teachers using TIPS.

TIPS is not a "canned" program. Rather it is a process that must match a school's curriculum objectives. The prototype activities are **examples** developed with teachers who were using TIPS in their schools with their students. Within a school or district, teachers may choose among the prototype activities, adapt activities, and add their own TIPS assignments to match their curricula and the needs of their own students.

Homework must be responsive to what students are learning, to their needs for practicing, creating, discovering, and communicating skills and ideas. Homework also responds to the needs of families to know what their children are learning. TIPS must be integrated into teachers' well-planned classwork and homework designs.

One way to develop TIPS activities is for a school or district to provide salary for a few teachers at each grade level to work together during the summer months. It takes about two weeks of work to plan and write the first drafts of TIPS activities for one school year, and another two weeks to edit and produce the activities for use by the students and parents. (If it is not possible to work over a summer, TIPS may be developed over a school year. If all school staff serve on school improvement committees, for example, TIPS may be one active working group.)

A rule of thumb is that each homework activity takes about an hour to design, another hour to edit, another hour to test and revise, and another hour to produce on a computer, with graphics, ready for printing. Thus, a set of about 40 activities per subject requires about 4 weeks of work by those involved in the design and production efforts.

It helps if two or more teachers work together discussing, writing, and editing their ideas. Optimally, the length of a TIPS activity is the front and back of one piece of paper. Space should be provided for a home-to-school communication section. Printing the activities on colored paper helps identify the TIPS activities; students and parents look for the "homework on the blue paper" that requires interaction with a family member.

Creating TIPS homework activities is more than cutting and pasting ideas from other homework. TIPS homework designers/producers must build student-family interaction into every activity. In most TIPS activities this

means asking students and families to interview each other, play a game, collect data, record reactions or suggestions, apply a skill to real life, or work together in some other way. The foundation of all TIPS homework activities should be students and families sharing an enjoyable and challenging learning experience.

The team of homework designers/producers **must include teachers**, but may include project coordinators, district curriculum leaders, administrators, parents, students, members of the community, cooperative researchers, or others, depending on the resources of the school or district and the time for coordinating efforts. **Parents and students react to the assignments** as they use them during the year. Their reactions should help teachers revise the activities for use again, or for use by other teachers. Thus, everyone in the school and family partnership helps design TIPS homework activities.

Teachers must be paid for their time during the summer to develop TIPS, but their work may be useful to all other teachers in a school or district who use the same or similar curricula. Thus, a small investment in the design, selection, adaptation, and implementation of TIPS is very cost effective. The work of a few teachers can benefit many others.

The major costs are for teacher and administrator time and for printing the activities for students' use. Other minor costs include letters, surveys, and other follow-up activities to orient families and to document and study the success of the project.

TIPS LANGUAGE ARTS HOMEWORK

Link to curriculum.

TIPS Language Arts Interactive Homework is an integral part of the language arts curriculum. The assignments are written to link directly to the school's language arts curriculum, to build and reinforce the skills needed for success in this subject, and to create interest, enjoyment, and positive attitudes in language arts.

The following language skills are developed and shared by students with their families in the various TIPS Language Arts activities: mastering forms of writing including descriptive, narrative, explanatory, and creative paragraphs, short stories, tall tales, elaborating ideas and details, responding to prompts for writing, and other forms; improving understanding of grammar, words and meanings including similes, homonyms, analogies, context clues, multiple meanings, facts and opinions, chronological order, and others; writing to follow up reading including story problems, story plans, reacting to stories, and others. All of these involve students communicating -- speaking, reading, editing, interviewing, listening, and thinking -- with parents or other family members.

TIPS Language Arts should be sent home weekly or every two weeks on a regular basis to maintain a flow of information and interaction.

Involving families in interactive language arts homework.

Our research and workshops with teachers reveal that teachers and parents are more comfortable with involvement in reading and language arts than other subjects, but in the middle grades this involvement decreases dramatically. Some teachers worry that interaction means the parents will do the work for their children. Some parents who do not read or write very well worry they will not measure up to the teacher's or their early adolescents' expectations. TIPS solves these problems by making it the students' responsibility to do their own homework, as they collect information and reactions orally from parents.

Parents enjoy hearing a paragraph or story their children have written or a speech that can be practiced at home. Parents like to discuss ideas and memories of their own adolescence with their early adolescents. Early adolescents enjoy these exchanges, too, commenting that TIPS helps them learn something from and about their parents that they would not have otherwise known.

The language arts -- reading, writing, speaking, and listening -- are the keys to student success in school and in life. Clearly designed language arts homework that enables students to interact with their families should help more students communicate better.

Follow-up activities in class.

When the homework is completed, the teacher should plan to conduct a short, stimulating follow-up activity in class to give students opportunities to share their work and their families' responses and reactions. Follow-up activities reinforce the importance of homework, the importance of family

involvement, and the contributions of family interactions to enrich thinking about language arts.

Teachers should treat TIPS Language Arts assignments exactly the way they treat all other homework in terms of collecting and marking the work. The one difference is that the discussions emphasize the importance of families' interactions and show the schools' appreciation of all families.

Students should know that TIPS homework activities are as important as all other homework, that they will be checked regularly and discussed in class.

From time to time, TIPS homework should be collected (by teachers, administrators, or project leaders) to assess and improve the activities and the implementation process.

COMPONENTS OF TIPS LANGUAGE ARTS HOMEWORK

Each TIPS Language Arts assignment includes:

1. **Letter to Parent or Guardian** briefly states the topic and specific language arts skill of the activity. Students write in the date due and sign the letter.

2. **Objectives** are presented clearly and concisely so that the student can read them to the parent or the parent can read them with the student.

3. **Materials** are listed if more than pencil and paper are needed. If specific materials are required, they are mainly common, inexpensive, or readily available items in the home. If students do not have or cannot get them, the materials should be provided by the school.

4. **Procedures** guide students' work. Spaces and forms are provided so that students can do most of the work on the TIPS homework paper. Sometimes teachers may want students to write "final" copies of paragraphs on regular notebook paper. Individual teachers may change some of the procedures at the time they discuss the activity with their students to meet special requirements or special needs of the students.

5. **Discussion Questions** guide students' and parents' interactions. The questions should lead to enjoyable parent-student exchanges, including students' interviews of parents about language arts skills, writing, and other reactions to what students read or write.

6. **Home-to-School Communication** invites parents to provide comments and observations to teachers, noting whether their child understood the homework, whether they enjoyed doing the activity with their child, and whether they gained information about their child's work in language arts.

7. **Parent Signature** is requested on each activity.

TIPS SCIENCE/HEALTH HOMEWORK

Link to curriculum.

TIPS Science/Health Interactive Homework is an integral part of the science curriculum. The assignments are written to link directly to the school's curriculum in science/health, to build and reinforce the skills needed for success in those subjects, and to create interest, enjoyment, and positive attitudes in science and health.

The following science skills are developed and shared by students with their families in the various TIPS activities: classifying, collecting data, communicating, comparing, decision making, defining problems, designing models, drawing conclusions, experimenting, formulating questions, hypothesizing, identifying patterns and relationships, inferring, interpreting data, measuring, observing, predicting, problem solving, recording data, using the scientific method, summarizing, and other high level thinking skills.

TIPS Science/Health homework should be sent home weekly or every two weeks on a regular basis to maintain a flow of information and interaction.

Involving families in interactive science homework.

Our research and workshops with teachers reveal that teachers and parents avoid involvement in science. TIPS helps solve this problem by requiring students to conduct hands-on science activities at home and to talk over their results and conclusions with family members.

Science is one subject that students opt out of because they find it boring or too hard or removed from real life. In fact, science should be exciting, challenging, and part of everyday life. Science sometimes is minimized in the elementary and middle grades if no standardized tests are required; time is spent on the subjects that are tested. This does not encourage students to become interested in and committed to science.

The TIPS Science process is designed to put students and parents at ease about discussing science and health at home, through hands-on activities that focus on science and health and its importance in everyday life.

Follow-up activities in class.

When the homework is completed, the teacher should plan to conduct a short, stimulating follow-up discussion or demonstration in class to give students opportunities to share their data charts, lab reports, and other written work and their families' responses and reactions. Time should also be available to discuss students' and/or parents' questions about the activity. Follow-up activities may extend or enrich the home learning experience, reinforce the importance of homework, the importance of family involvement, and the contributions of family interactions to enrich thinking about science and health.

Teachers should treat TIPS Science/Health assignments exactly the way they treat all other homework in terms of collecting and marking the work. The one difference is that the discussions emphasize the importance of families' ideas and reactions and show the schools' appreciation of all families.

Students should know that TIPS homework is as important as all other homework, that it will be checked regularly and discussed in class.

From time to time, TIPS homework should be collected (by teachers, administrators, or project leaders) to assess and improve the activities and the implementation process.

COMPONENTS OF TIPS SCIENCE/HEALTH HOMEWORK

Each TIPS Science/Health homework assignment includes:

1. **Letter to Parent or Guardian** briefly states the topic and specific science skills involved in the activity. Students write in the due date and sign the letter.

2. **Objectives** are presented clearly and concisely so that the student can read them to the parent or the parent can read them with the student.

3. **Materials** are common, inexpensive, immediately available, or easily obtainable items in the home. If students do not have or cannot get them, the materials should be provided by the school.

4. **Procedures** guide students in their work, step-by-step. Each assignment includes "hands-on" science work or requires students to think and act like scientists. Individual teachers may change some of the procedures at the time they discuss the activity with their students to meet special requirements or special needs of the students.

5. **Lab Report** (or **Data Chart**, or other work space) allows students to show their work and ideas. The assignments often include "writing across the curriculum" as students establish hypotheses, draw conclusions, or obtain reactions from parents or other family members. Often they are asked to write their answers and conclusions in complete sentences or in a paragraph.

6. **Conclusions** guide the interactions of students and parents. The questions should lead to enjoyable parent-student exchanges about science and health. Students may read their conclusions aloud to a parent to share their work and to obtain reactions.

7. **Home-to-School Communication** invites parents to share comments and observations with teachers, noting whether their child understood the homework, whether they enjoyed doing the activity with their child, and whether they gained information about their child's work in science and health.

8. **Parent Signature** is requested on each activity.

IMPLEMENTING A TIPS HOMEWORK PROJECT

WHAT THE TEACHER DOES

1. Attends an orientation session for an overview and discussion of TIPS. This should be provided by the project leader or lead teacher who is helping others to implement TIPS.

2. Conducts an orientation meeting for parents.

3. Plans and **selects** which TIPS homework will be used each week (or every two weeks) to fit in with the students' classwork or needed skills. The activities may be ordered as teachers pick and choose assignments to match, enrich, or review classwork.

4. Distributes the assignment to students and, **each time**:
   - Addresses and clarifies students' questions about procedures or vocabulary before the assignments are sent home.
   - Emphasizes the importance of involving family members in schoolwork.
   - Notes the sections that require interactions with a parent or other member of the family.
   - Tells students when the homework is due.

   In some classes, a teacher may need to go through each step, review difficult terms, and clarify directions. In some classes, a teacher may tailor assignments by assigning only some portions for slower students, making some sections for extra credit, or adding some activities for advanced students.

5. Follows up the homework in class on the due date. The teacher discusses the TIPS assignment and asks students to share their work and discuss family reactions and ideas. The teacher may clarify questions, conduct demonstrations, introduce enrichment activities, and/or continue with the next lesson.

6. Considers incentives or recognitions for students who not only do their homework, but also involve their families as directed in TIPS activities.

7. Maintains records of student homework, including TIPS activities.

8. Communicates with families about TIPS and other matters concerning classwork, homework, and student progress, in meetings, conferences, newsletters, notes, or telephone conversations. In all communications, language must be understandable to all families so they can act on their own wishes and the school's expectations for involvement.

9. Notes ideas for improving the TIPS activities and designs new TIPS assignments to fit the curriculum as needed. New or additional activities will be needed as the curriculum is expanded or changed.

10. Shares ideas or suggestions about the homework assignments, family participation, project implementation, or other issues with other teachers and project staff.

WHAT THE STUDENT DOES

1. Looks over the TIPS homework assignment. Asks the teacher any questions about procedures or directions that are not clear.

2. Takes the TIPS assignment home, shows it to a parent, gathers needed materials, and finds a location in which to work.

3. Follows the directions, talks with a parent or family member as directed in the assignment, and completes the homework. This should be an enjoyable exchange of ideas and information.

4. Asks a parent or family member to respond to the Home-to-School Communication and to sign the activity.

5. Returns the assignment to class on the due date. Shares responses and questions about the activity.

WHAT THE FAMILY DOES

1. Learns how the TIPS process works and how to interact with their early adolescent on activities in language arts and in science/health. Information is provided to families in several forms: a letter from the principal, orientation sessions, information from the students, and phone calls from the teachers or project leader.

2. Assists student, when necessary, to gather materials for the activities.

3. Participates and interacts with the student as required in each TIPS homework activity.

4. Checks each week to see if there is a TIPS homework activity and encourages the student to think about and discuss the homework assignment.

5. Monitors TIPS and all homework so that the student knows that the family cares about what he or she is learning in school.

6. Completes the Home-to-School Communication, adds a comment if desired, and signs each TIPS activity. Communicates with the teacher about any questions or concerns.

7. Expresses enjoyment and interest in their child's work in each subject; motivates student to do his or her best each day in school and on each homework assignment; conveys family belief that school and learning are important.

WHAT THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR DOES

1. Appoints a Project Leader/Facilitator.

2. Supports the teachers, students, parents, and project leader in the development and implementation of the TIPS Homework Project.

3. Sends a letter to parents explaining the TIPS project. This may be sent during the summer or early in the fall. A reminder may be sent during the school year and in school newsletters throughout the year. In all communications, language must be understandable to all families.

4. Provides time for the orientation of teachers to the TIPS Homework Project.

5. Provides time during strategic meetings for teachers to inform and remind parents about their roles in the TIPS Homework Project.

6. Monitors the success of the project; offers teachers and project staff recognition, encouragement, and suggestions.

WHAT THE PROJECT LEADER DOES

The TIPS process should be implemented with the help of a project leader or facilitator -- a teacher or administrator who helps all teachers use the process effectively.

1. Conducts orientation sessions for teachers and parents to provide information about the TIPS Homework Project.

2. Assists with the writing and completes the editing of homework activities.

3. Helps teachers set up procedures to:
   - print and distribute TIPS activities
   - maintain records to monitor homework completion
   - contact students in families who need more information on how to complete TIPS activities together

4. Gathers ideas and reactions from teachers, principals, parents, and students to improve the TIPS Homework Project.

5. Maintains communication with teachers to share ideas to improve or to add assignments.

6. Collects samples of homework activities on a regular schedule (e.g. once a month or other selected time period) to assess the implementation and the effects of the process.

7. Discusses the patterns of participation and results of data collected with the teachers, principals, parents, funding sources, and others.

8. Assists teachers in other ways that they identify.

EVALUATING A TIPS HOMEWORK PROJECT

There are three main goals for TIPS:

- To encourage students to **complete their homework** and to **improve** their attitudes behaviors, and achievements.
- To create useful **two-way communications** about schoolwork -- from school-to-home-to-school.
- To promote good **interactions** at home between students and their families about schoolwork.

When educators use TIPS, they must evaluate whether and how the process helps them reach their goals for school and family connections.

TIPS homework comes with two "built in" evaluations. First, students are expected to complete the TIPS activities just as they do any homework. Teachers grade, return, and discuss TIPS just as they do other homework.

Second, every TIPS activity includes a section called "Home-to-School Communication" so that parents can provide observations and reactions to their children's work. This section lets parents tell teachers if their students understood the homework or need extra help from the teacher, whether the assignment was enjoyable to parents and students at home, and if the activity informed parents about schoolwork in a particular subject. Teachers monitor parents' reactions and respond to questions with phone calls, notes, or individual meetings.

A special evaluation of a sample activity should be conducted at the start of the year to see if students and families understand and use the TIPS process. This may be conducted by each teacher who uses TIPS. Or, the Project Leader can check across classes to see if all teachers are implementing TIPS effectively. The sample activity -- the first one sent home with students each year -- should be checked immediately. Some questions are:

- How many students understand how to complete the TIPS activity by interacting with a parent?
- How many students complete the homework?
- How many parents complete the home-to-school section and sign the activity?
- What do parents write as comments or questions?
- How do the teachers respond to parents' questions or concerns?

At this check point teachers should discuss with students whether the activity was enjoyable. They should call all families of students who did not complete the TIPS homework to help them understand the process so the parents are ready to participate in the TIPS activities each week.

Follow-up activities also are needed to learn whether parents need more information, explanations, or guidance in the use of TIPS at home and in their interactions with their children about schoolwork. This may be done with informal interviews, phone calls, or class or grade level meetings with parents.

Informal and formal evaluations of TIPS have been conducted and reports are available.

TEN QUESTIONS TEACHERS ASK ABOUT TIPS HOMEWORK

There are many questions that teachers and parents ask about TIPS interactive homework and other types of parent involvement. The following questions and answers should help teachers and administrators discuss their own expectations and concerns.

Why should the TIPS process work?

The TIPS process:

- Can be used with any text or curriculum
- Involves students as active learners and guides them to share and demonstrate their skills to show parents what they are learning
- Emphasizes mastery of basic and advanced skills
- Helps teachers organize homework into manageable, focused segments
- Emphasizes connections between school and home
- Offers opportunities to link homework to the real world experiences of early adolescents and families
- Provides families with the information they ask for on how to help at home each year.

Schools are hearing calls for **more** homework. TIPS focuses on **better** homework, with active work for students as they interact with parents. TIPS offers a winning combination -- more and better activities and more and better communications with parents.

Although many parents try to help their early adolescents, the efforts are often off-target -- unrelated to the work the teacher expects the student to learn for class. Sometimes parents' attempts to be helpful at home produce (rather than reduce) tensions -- between teacher and parent and between parent and child -- if parents are unfamiliar with the students' work or how the teachers want work done. The TIPS process keeps parent help and student learning on-target. The homework, designed and directed by the teacher, covers skills important for students' success in class.

How are homework and TIPS interactive homework different?

Some homework is designed for students to do on their own. TIPS activities are designed for students to do with their families.

On any homework, students may ask their parents for help if they have questions about the assignments. Often questions arise that stump students and delay their progress with homework. Sometimes, one clarification enables a student to understand, continue, and complete the work. Immediate assistance from a knowledgeable parent can prevent frustration and failure on homework assignments.

The teacher should let parents know that it is OK to answer their early adolescents' questions. It also is important for parents to check to see that the students' work is completed, adding encouragement ("That looks very good."), advice ("Did you remember to proofread your work?" or "... put your name and

heading on the paper?"), and substantive discussions ("What did you learn from your work?" or "Tell me about ..." or "Read me what you wrote.").

TIPS interactive homework activities are specially designed to (a) increase parent-child communication about school subjects, (b) assist students' academic skills and communication skills, and (c) improve parent knowledge about their child's schoolwork. For example, TIPS activities offer options for independent or parent-supervised work and include topics for family conversations about language arts and science/health activities.

Some parents know how to help their children and others have no idea of how to help. TIPS activities enable all parents to help because the interactions are part of the homework design and students are required to talk with someone to complete the work.

Isn't it enough to have parents involved at school as volunteers?

When you say "parent involvement" most teachers and administrators think of **parents** helping at the school -- in the classroom, cafeteria, library, computer lab, or other areas of the school, or on trips or at parties when additional adults are needed for the safety and smooth functioning of activities. This common type of parent involvement includes relatively few parents. In one study, only 4% of parents (one to two parents per classroom, on average) became very active at the elementary school building. In the middle grades, the numbers are even lower. Most parents cannot come to the school because they work during school hours.

In contrast, parent involvement in learning activities at home can include most or all parents. This type of parent involvement requires teachers to plan ahead to develop or select activities that can be conducted and discussed at home to help build students' skills. It is the one type of involvement that just about all parents -- including parents of middle grades students -- ask for in order to be able to assist their children each year.

What if a student has no parent available to interact with on a TIPS assignment on a particular night?

TIPS homework should be assigned to give students at least two or three nights to complete the work so that most parents will have time to interact with their children. Some assignments could be made over a weekend when parents say they have time to work with their children.

These arrangements take into account that some parents work at night, attend other meetings, have other children at home, or have other obligations that may reduce the time on a given night for thoughtful interaction. Assignments over a few days also recognize that some activities require students to gather specific materials that they may not have immediately at home. Some assignments, particularly in science, require observations over several days.

In a few cases where a parent is rarely available, unavailable, or not present, teachers may suggest that the student interact with other family members -- a grandparent, aunt or uncle, older sibling, other relative, or a neighbor. If parents are traveling or away from home, a babysitter, housekeeper, or relative may take the place of a parent. The assignments ask the student to

talk with "a parent or family member" to account for students' different family situations.

In a small number of cases where no one ever is available, arrangements must be made for students to interact with a teacher, staff, or peer at school. Even if they do not interact with someone at home, students are responsible for completing TIPS assignments just as they must complete all homework.

The same sensitivity to students' different family circumstances is needed with TIPS that teachers give to their other contacts and interactions with families.

What if 100% of the families do not participate in TIPS homework with the students?

The TIPS Homework Project is designed to **increase** the number of families who are informed and involved in their children's education through the grades. It is expected that the number of families who are partners with the school will increase incrementally -- **growing each year**.

Before beginning to use TIPS, teachers and project staff should identify or estimate the percentage of students who usually complete their homework and the number of families who understand what their children are learning and who regularly talk to their children about schoolwork. Some classes may start at 90% and others at 30%. The number of students who complete TIPS assignments should match or exceed the rates for regular homework. Over time, the rate of completion and quality of students' homework should improve.

Some teachers are concerned about conflicts between "middle class" values and goals of schools and different values and goals of families. They believe that these conflicts will prevent some parents from becoming involved with learning activities at home. Research suggests that these problems are overstated or misinterpreted.

In one study of more than 1200 parents, over 85% of the parents reported that they and the teacher have the **same goals** for their child. All parents -- middle class and working class -- want their children to succeed in school. And, almost all parents want teachers to provide information and guidance on how to help their children on learning activities at home.

TIPS activities are designed to build on these common goals. The activities aim to promote student success on basic and advanced skills.

In recent evaluations in inner-city schools, teachers report higher rates of return of TIPS homework than regular homework and dramatic increases in family involvement through TIPS. Over time, the number of families who say that they know what their children are learning or know how to interact with their early adolescents on schoolwork should increase.

Aren't TIPS interactive homework activities an intrusion on the family's time?

Teachers "intrude" on families' schedules and activities whenever homework is given. The older the student, the more homework and the greater the intrusion on family time. However, homework is accepted as an

important mechanism for reinforcing classroom instruction. Indeed, parents expect their children to have homework.

Studies and interviews show that carefully constructed TIPS assignments that guide interaction on interesting topics are viewed positively by parents and by students.

How do TIPS activities work for students who are slower learners or who start with lower skills, or for those who need more challenge?

TIPS activities were designed by teachers who wanted all students to feel challenged, but also wanted all students to have similar learning opportunities. Recognizing that they would have students who start with varying abilities, the teachers designed most of the activities to challenge students at their own levels.

The assignments are written so that just about all students will be able to read them. Teachers go over each activity in class so that all students know what each assignment requires. Each student proceeds at his or her own level of ability on the assignment.

Students who read at a low level will require more thorough explanations in class before they take the assignments home. Some teachers may decide to assign slower students only *some parts* of the assignment to make the task more manageable. The other sections may be considered "extra credit." Even slower students may choose to complete interesting activities to boost their classwork or test scores.

Some teachers may assign TIPS activities more often than once a week to slower students to reinforce skills or provide extra practice in specific skills. This extra work for mastery may be developed in partnership with the students and families to assure students have opportunities to meet requirements to pass a grade.

Some teachers may ask advanced students to complete extra activities that the teachers (or students, or families) add to the TIPS assignments.

With clear instructions and reinforcement from their teachers, all students should be able to conduct and complete the interactions with a parent or other family member. TIPS activities must be understood by the students, because the parents or family members are <u>not</u> expected to read, explain, or teach the assignments. Rather, the student is expected to do the homework assignment and share his/her ideas and work with the family.

Adjustments must be made if teachers believe the TIPS activities cannot be understood or completed successfully by the students.

Teachers may design their own TIPS assignments that require students to talk to someone at home about something interesting and important that they are learning in class in language arts, math, science, or any subject.

Will parent involvement make students less independent?

Teachers often wonder whether parent involvement in learning activities at home helps or hinders students' independence in learning. How much

"help" should parents give in each subject at each grade level? When (if ever) is it better not to help? Research shows that the best and most independent students regularly receive advice and assistance at home on homework and other kinds of learning activities.

Teachers can provide parents with ideas of how to encourage learning and increase students' abilities to be more independent.

TIPS asks students to "take charge" of interactions with parents or other family members as part of their homework. The design should increase students' self confidence in showing and telling parents what they are learning in class, and gathering information and reactions from parents for their work. In this way, TIPS may help increase students' independence and control over their own learning.

What are the expected payoffs from TIPS?

If the TIPS process is implemented successfully, the teacher will have gained many helpful and knowledgeable parents to encourage and support their children. These parents will be prepared for next year's teacher, making it increasingly easy to involve families in children's learning activities at home.

If TIPS is implemented successfully, there should be some benefits to students -- more homework completed, more skills mastered, greater understanding that their parents support their schoolwork. More students will see a link between school and home.

Teachers' frequent use of parent involvement in learning activities at home may reduce teachers' fear of parents and parents' fear of teachers. When teachers and parents work together to help children achieve important goals they develop respect and appreciation for each other.

How soon will teachers see results of their efforts to involve parents?

It takes time for parent involvement in learning activities at home to influence student achievement or parent understanding of school programs. In a short time, however, there should be noticeable improvement in parents' interactions with teachers and students' attitudes about school and homework.

TIPS activities must be used frequently and on a regular schedule to have an impact on the participants. Teachers are advised to give new practices in parent involvement time to work, and to evaluate how the parents and students respond to the activities. Results come only when a program is well implemented.

Parents are immediately grateful to teachers for involving them in their children's work at home. Results on student achievement take longer to see and must be carefully measured.

WHAT PARENTS OF MIDDLE GRADES STUDENTS ARE SAYING ABOUT TIPS

In the implementation in two inner-city middle schools, the parents wrote many comments to the teachers in the section of TIPS called "Home-to-School Communication." Some of the comments were positive, others negative, others questioning, others personal. All revealed the parents' concern for their children, desire for involvement, and appreciation of teachers' efforts to communicate with them. The comments are in the words of the parents.

Other results from the first year's study of the implementation process are available in a separate report.

On TIPS Language Arts assignments:

I enjoy doing these assignment, because it gives you a lot to think about, and how much I forget.

Very interesting assignment. I enjoy this also it brought back good memories.

My child has made realize how much she's grown.

This exercise helped Shelita to make important decisions dealing with right and wrong. Which she knows sometimes you have to do what right. Even when it hurts.

He doesn't understand the part about writing a paragraph and using the interviewing partie as the subject.

I think every subject in school should have homework like this to do with their parents.

I car. tell from Jenneaka relating the story to me she really enjoyed reading Janey and the Moonlight.

Brian needs to pay attention to his spelling.

Erica's interests have become quite stimulated because of these assignments. Send more!

Anthony is improving everyday I believe his report card will be better.

This blue paper is a learning experience for me.

Devin put more effort into this assignment than the others.

Please stay on Billy and make him do his work.

On TIPS Science/Health assignments:

Keisha learn a lot abut herself and the things she needs to work on to maker her a better person.

Yes, I am glad we discuss working with blind people. us can see what it is like.

We are still working on neatness.

Assignment was difficult for the both of us hope you will explain it to the students in turn she will help me to understand.

Althea's thought process was more mature than what I knews.

I think she could have done a better job with the consequences.

It was a very interesting interview for me and my niece.

It opened up a easier way of communicating about sex.

Learning can be fun like this.

The crossword puzzle was real tricky but we got it.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Note to teachers: Do you have other questions? If you have questions, ideas, or suggestions about TIPS, please write them down to discuss with the project staff and with other teachers.

APPENDICES

A: LANGUAGE ARTS
- Lists of Activities
- Sample Activities
- Blank Form

B: SCIENCE/HEALTH
- Lists of Activities
- Sample Activities
- Blank Form

C: SUMMARY OF RESEARCH RESULTS

APPENDIX A1

TIPS LANGUAGE ARTS
List of Activities Grade 6

WRITING

L6-1 Writing a Paragraph -- A Favorite Activity
L6-2 Parts of a Paragraph -- Set it Straight
L6-3 Creative Writing and Oral Speaking -- It's News to Me
L6-4 Rhyming Poem -- Who Are You?
L6-5 Combining Sentences -- Make Short Ones Long
L6-6 Explanatory Writing -- Late Night Movie
L6-7 Explanatory Writing -- A Shopping Spree
L6-8 Explanatory Writing -- Where Would You Travel?
L6-9 Explanatory Writing -- On a Desert Island
L6-10 Narrative Writing -- A Typical Day
L6-11 Narrative Writing -- What's So Funny?
L6-12 Narrative Writing -- Planning a Party
L6-13 Narrative Poem -- Keeping Time

GRAMMAR

L6-14 Nouns and Adjectives -- In the Kitchen
L6-15 Proper Nouns -- The Name's the Thing
L6-16 Eradicating Errors
L6-17 Verbs -- Put Them in Action
L6-18 Verbs -- Present and Past
L6-19 Commas and Quotation Marks -- Interviewing a Famous Person

WORDS AND MEANINGS

L6-20 Multiple Meaning Words -- Give It a Shot!
L6-21 Fact or Opinion?
L6-22 Sequential Order -- Now, You're Cooking
L6-23 Order! Order!
L6-24 Similarities and Differences
L6-25 Chronological Order -- Memories of Me

LINKING READING AND WRITING

L6-26 Book Jacket -- A Main Event
L6-27 Action Pack
L6-28 Paper Bag Puppet -- Creating a Story Character
L6-29 Biographies -- Frame It!
L6-30 Adventures in Eating -- Menus Today and Yesterday
L6-31 Shopping Mall Designer -- Story Stores
L6-32 Animal Film -- Sequential Order
L6-33 Animal Tales --Comical Character
L6-34 Animal Tales -- Art Project
L6-35 Essay: The Best Short Story I've Read

TIPS LANGUAGE ARTS
List of Activities Grade 7

WRITING

L7-1 Descriptive Paragraph: First Impressions
L7-2 What a Character!
L7-3 Descriptive Words -- Styles of the Famous
L7-4 A Special Soul
L7-5 T.V. Tale -- Telling Time
L7-6 Hairy Tales from the Past
L7-7 Eyewitness
L7-8 True Story!
L7-9 You Are There -- Writing a Monlog
L7-10 Letter Writing: Advice to a Talk Show Host
L7-11 Talk Show Guest
L7-12 The Thinking-Writing Connection -- Making Decisions

REVIEW:

L7-13 Combining Sentences -- Make Us One
L7-14 Sentence Completion -- Can You Say More?
L7-15 Set a Good Example
L7-16 Can You Do Imitations?
L7-17 Whose Portrait on a Dollar?
L7-18 Stick to the Facts

GRAMMAR

L7-19 Do They Agree -- Subjects and Verbs?
L7-20 Verbs -- Where and When is the Action?
L7-21 Adjectives and Adverbs -- How Descriptive!
L7-22 Parts-of-Speech Sweatshirt
L7-23 Edit This, Editor

WORDS AND MEANINGS

L7-24 Categories -- What's What?
L7-25 Order in the Kitchen -- Can You Cook?
L7-26 Fact or Opinion -- Which is Which?
L7-27 Context Clues: Being Late is a Big Mistake!
L7-28 A Word to the Wise -- Vary Very
L7-29 Expanding Similes
L7-30 The Homonyms Jeopardy Game
L7-31 Predicting Outcomes -- Solving Riddles

LINKING READING AND WRITING

L7-32 Character Computer: ·Input and Output
L7-33 Animals in Print -- It's in the Cards
L7-34 Be a Literary Critic -- Tell It Like It Is
L7-35 My, How Times Have Changed
L7-36 Tell a Tall Tale
L7-37 Don't Miss This Myth
L7-38 "AD" it Up
L7-39 Story Problems -- What was that Story Again?
L7-40 Story Plans -- Retell Me a Story
L7-41 Brainstorm a Story Plan
L7-42 The Big Three -- Characters, Setting, Plot
L7-43 The Whole Story

APPENDIX A2

L6-6

Name: _____ Class:_____ Date:_____

EXPLANATORY WRITING -- LATE NIGHT MOVIE

Dear Parent or Guardian,

We are improving how we write to explain ideas clearly. This activity will help build skills in writing. I hope you enjoy this activity with me. This assignment is due _____.

Sincerely,

_____

OBJECTIVE: To use the writing process to write a clear explanatory letter.

MATERIALS: pen or pencil with eraser notebook paper

PROCEDURE:

1. Read the prompt aloud to your family member. Tell your family member the topic, purpose, audience, and form of the writing you must do.

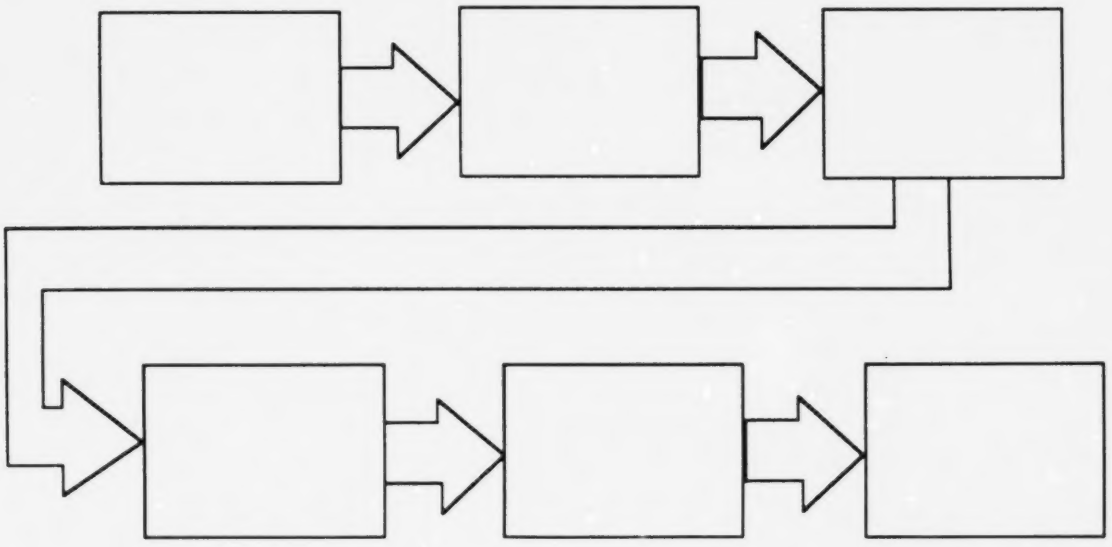
Suppose you had to convince your parent or guardian to let you stay up very late to watch a movie. Write a letter to your parent or guardian explaining why it is important for you to be allowed to stay up late to watch this movie.

Before you begin to write, think about the name of the movie you must see and the person you must convince to let you stay up. Think of at least two reasons why you **must** see the movie. Think about what you will offer in exchange for being allowed to stay up late and watch the movie.

Now write a letter to your parent or guardian explaining why it is important for you to stay up late to watch a movie.

2. Complete your prewriting by filling in the sequence chain to show what you will write.

Sequence Chain for ☐



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3. Write the first draft of your friendly letter:

4. **Read what you have written to your family member.** Ask the following questions and write the answers you get. **Who is working with you?** _____

a. What did you like about my letter? _____

b. What should I fix to make my letter explain my ideas more clearly?

5. Make the suggested changes that will improve your letter and write the final copy of your letter on notebook paper. Bring your final copy with this assignment when it is due.

HOME-TO-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION:

Dear Parent,

Please give me your reactions to your child's work on this activity.

Write YES or NO for each statement.

_____ 1. My child understood the homework and was able to discuss it.

_____ 2. My child and I enjoyed the activity.

_____ 3. This assignment helped me know what my child is learning in language arts.

Any other comments: _____

Parent Signature _____

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Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

PROPER NOUNS -- THE NAME'S THE THING

Dear Parent or Guardian,

We are mastering the use of proper nouns. I hope you enjoy this activity with me. This assignment is due _____.

Sincerely,

_____

OBJECTIVE: To identify common and proper nouns.

PROCEDURE:

1. Explain the differences between a common noun and a proper noun to your family member.

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

(✓) **Common noun**: names any person, place, or thing and is not written with a capital letter. **Example: state**

Proper noun: names a special (specific) person, place, or thing and is written with a capital letter. **Example: Maryland**

2. For each of the common nouns listed below, write **your own choice** of a **proper noun** that fits the category. Ask **your family member** to tell you their choice of a proper noun for each one. You write their choice in the column labeled Family Member's Choice. The list continues on the next page. **Who is working with you?** _____

3. For example, for the first common noun **car**, YOU might choose the proper noun **Ford**, and YOUR FAMILY MEMBER might choose the proper noun **Chevy**. **You** would write these in the columns below. Of course, you and your family member will make your own choices n each case.

Common Noun	Proper Nouns: My Choice	Family Member's Choice
car	_____	_____
planet	_____	_____
tennis shoe	_____	_____
actor/actress	_____	_____
detergent	_____	_____
book	_____	_____
store	_____	_____
state	_____	_____
cereal	_____	_____

MORE Proper Nouns

Common Noun	My Choice	Family Member's Choice
city	_____	_____
candy	_____	_____
athlete	_____	_____
movie	_____	_____
soda	_____	_____
hero	_____	_____
gum	_____	_____
fast food restaurant	_____	_____
game show host	_____	_____
record	_____	_____
soup	_____	_____
sweatsuit	_____	_____

DISCUSSION: Talk over these questions with your family member.

1. How can you tell the difference between common nouns and proper nouns?

_____

2. Why are proper nouns important? _____

_____

3. Ask your family member to tell you **5 proper nouns** and you write them down in the column below. Then choose a **common noun** that goes with each one. For example, if your family member gave the proper noun, **Milky Way**, YOU might write the common noun, **candy**, or the common noun, **galaxy**.

	Proper Noun	Common Noun
1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____

HOME-TO-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION:

Dear Parent, Please give me your reactions to your child's work on this activity. Write YES or NO for each statement.

_____ 1. My child understood the homework and was able to discuss it.

_____ 2. My child and I enjoyed the activity.

_____ 3. This assignment helped me know what my child is learning in language arts.

Any other comments: _____

Parent Signature _____

Name:_____ Class:_____ Date:_____

HAIRY TALES FROM THE PAST

Dear Parent or Guardian,

We are writing clear explanations. In this assignment, I will collect good information from you. I hope you enjoy this activity with me. This assignment is due _____.

Sincerely,

_____

OBJECTIVE: To write an explanatory paragraph telling how the hairstyles of today compare with those of the past.

PROCEDURE:

1. **Family Interview. Who are you interviewing?** _____

Ask:

a. In what decade were you born? (1950s, 1960s, etc.) _____

b. When you were my age, what types of hairstyles were popular...

for boys?_____

_____

for girls?_____

_____

c. What hair style did you wear at my age? _____

d. Did your parents agree with your choice of hairstyle? _____

Why or why not?_____

e. Which of today's styles do you like most, and why? _____

_____

f. Which of today's styles do you dislike most, and why? _____

_____

Ask your family member for a photograph with a hairstyle from the past. Or, draw a favorite hairstyle he or she wore at your age.

2. Now, write an explanatory paragraph based on the answers to your interview. You may choose to write it about hairstyles of the past, or compare past and present hairstyles. Use the space on the other side of this page.

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

1. **If you compare or contrast things, tell how they are <u>alike</u> and how they are <u>different</u>.**
2. **Give your paragraph a title.**
3. **Indent the first sentence of the paragraph.**
4. **Be sure all of your sentences relate to your main idea.**
5. **Use descriptive words to make your writing interesting.**

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Title:_____

Read your paragraph aloud to your family member. Fix any sentences that are unclear.

Select another topic for comparison -- e.g., styles of clothes, types of music, ways to have fun, rules at home, school work, or a question that you are curious about when your family member was your age. Which topic did you choose?_____

Write **5 questions (Q)** on this topic and **interview** your family member for the **answers (A)**.

1. Q._____
   A: _____
2. Q._____
   A: _____
3. Q._____
   A: _____
4. Q._____
   A: _____
5. Q._____
   A: _____

Bring these to class for further discussion and writing.

HOME-TO-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION:

Dear Parent, Please give me your reactions to your child's work on this activity. Write YES or NO for each statement.

_____ 1. My child understood the homework and was able to discuss it.
_____ 2. My child and I enjoyed the activity.
_____ 3. This assignment helped me know what my child is learning in language arts

Any other comments: _____

_____

Parent Signature: _____

Name:_____ Class:_____ Date:_____

ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS -- HOW DESCRIPTIVE!

Dear Parent or Guardian,

We are learning to use adjectives and adverbs to improve our writing. I hope you enjoy this activity with me. This assignment is due _____.

Sincerely,

_____

OBJECTIVE: To select adjectives and adverbs.

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

Read this aloud to a family member:

An **adjective** is used to describe **a noun or a pronoun**.

An **adverb** describes (or modifies) **a verb, adjective, or another adverb**.

PROCEDURE:

1. **Family Interview. Who are you interviewing?** _____

Read each sentence to your family member and ask for words he or she would use to describe you. You write in the **adjectives** your family member chooses.

a. I am the _____ parent or guardian of an early adolescent named (your name) _____.
b. This _____ youngster was a _____ and _____ baby.
c. He/she was a _____ and _____ toddler.
d. He/she was a _____ and _____ child.
e. Now he/she is a _____ and _____adolescent.

2. Select **5** of the adjectives from the sentences above and add an adverb that modifies or tells something more about the adjective. For example,

adjective: friendly add the **adverb** unusually = **unusually friendly**

	Adjective	**Adverb**	=	**Improved phrase**
1.	_____	_____		_____
2.	_____	_____		_____
3.	_____	_____		_____
4.	_____	_____		_____
5.	_____	_____		_____

3. Now list **5 adjectives** about your family member.
Who are you describing? _____

Add an **adverb** that modifies or tells something more about the adjective.

For example:
adjective: brave add the **adverb** bug-swattingly = **bug-swattingly brave**

	Adjective	**Adverb**	=	**Improved phrase**
1.	_____	_____		_____
2.	_____	_____		_____
3.	_____	_____		_____
4.	_____	_____		_____
5.	_____	_____		_____

Read your improved phrases to your family member. Ask for any descriptions that should be added to describe him or her better.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

4. Using your list and the descriptions added by your family member, write **5 good** sentences that **describe your family member**. **Circle** the adjectives and underline the adverbs that you used in each sentence.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

HOME-TO-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION:
Dear Parent,

Please give me your reaction to your child's work on this activity.
Write YES or NO for each statement.

____ 1. My child understood the assignment and was able to complete it.
____ 2. My child and I enjoyed the activity.
____ 3. This activity helped me to know what my child is learning in language arts.

Any comment: _____

_____

Parent Signature: _____

APPENDIX A3

Name:_____ Class:_____ Date:_____

(Title)

Dear Parent or Guardian,

We are learning to _____. I hope you enjoy this activity with me. This assignment is due _____.

Sincerely,

_____

OBJECTIVE:

MATERIALS: (Optional)

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

PROCEDURE:

(In writing activities, include space for writing plans and drafts.

In all TIPS activities, include various interactions with family. See samples in this manual and prototype activities.)

DISCUSSION:

(Include various interactions with family. See samples in this manual and prototype activities.)

HOME-TO-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION:

Dear Parent,

Please give me your reaction to your child's work on this activity.

Write YES or NO for each statement.

____ 1. My child understood the assignment and was able to complete it.

____ 2. My child and I enjoyed the activity.

____ 3. This activity helped me to know what my child is learning in language arts.

Any comment: _____

_____

Parent Signature: _____

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APPENDIX B1

TIPS SCIENCE and HEALTH

Aquatic Life and Science Skills
Health and Early Adolescent Development

List of Activities Grade 6

SCIENCE

S6-1 Graphing M&M's
S6-2 Line Graphs -- Graphing Daips
S6-3 Graphing Data -- Heads or Tails?
S6-4 Living in Water -- A Mean Decision
S6-5 Living in Water -- Classifying Objects
S6-6 Living in Water -- To Market We Go
S6-7 Living in Water -- The Disappearing Act
S6-8 Why are Some Bodies of Water so Salty?
S6-9 Living in Water -- Fresh and Salt Water Mixtures
S6-10 Living in Water -- You're in Hot Water Now
S6-11 Living in Water -- The Slimy Problem
S6-12 Living in Water -- Reading a Thermometer
S6-13 Living in Water -- Seasonal Changes
S6-14 Living in Water -- Dissolved Oxygen in Water
S6-15 Living in Water -- How Does a Body of Water Freeze?
S6-16 Aquatic Habitats -- The Top Ten
S6-17 Living in Water -- Who, What, and Where in Water?
S6-18 Living in Water -- Breaker! Breaker!
S6-19 The Universe -- The Final Frontier

HEALTH

H6-1 Health Education -- Changes in Adolescence
H6-2 Health Education -- The Healthy Mind
H6-3 Physical and Emotional Changes in Adolescence
H6-4 Health Education -- My Family
H6-5 Health Education -- Who Am I? Who Do I Want to Be?
H6-6 Health Education -- The Emotional You
H6-7 Health Education -- I See Me, You See Me
H6-8 Health Education -- All About Me
H6-9 Health Education -- Feeling Good About Me
H6-10 Health Education -- This is Valuable to Me
H6-11 Health Education -- What Should I Do?
H6-12 Health Education -- Decisions Made Easy
H6-13 Health Education -- Blinding Light
H6-14 Not Seeing is Believing
H6-15 Health Education -- Seeing the Blind Person's View
H6-16 Health Education -- Dizzy Ears
H6-17 Health Education -- Sounds of Music
H6-18 Health Education -- Food for Health
H6-19 Health Education -- Deciding About Drugs
H6-20 Health Education -- AIDS Awareness
H6-21 Health Education -- The Human Reproductive Process

TIPS SCIENCE and HEALTH

Life Science Skills and Topics

List of Activities Grade 7

Skills and Measurement

S7-1 Alphabet Soup
S7-2 Which Metric Unit Works?
S7-3 Using the Scientific Method
S7-4 Step By Step: Creating a Control Experiment
S7-5 Thinking with Data Displays
S7-6 More Thinking with Data Displays
S7-7 What's the Word?

Basic Concepts and Processes

S7-8 Life Span
S7-9 Is This Alive?
S7-10 Being Alive
S7-11 Case in Court -- Alive or Not?
S7-12 Osmosis
S7-13 And Then There Were One Million
S7-14 Big Business in Bacteria

Organ Systems and Related Health

S7-15 Identifying Organ Systems
S7-16 Circulatory System -- Feel the Beat!
S7-17 Circulatory System -- Let's Exercise
S7-18 Circulatory System -- Pump It Up!
S7-19 Circulatory and Respiratory Systems: We Will Recover
S7-20 Respiratory System -- Take a Deep Breath!
S7-21 Digestive System: Digest This
S7-22 The Energy Detective -- Finding Starch and Fat
S7-23 The Most Widely Used Drug
S7-24 The Excretory System -- Waste Away
S7-25 Nervous System -- The Brain
S7-26 Nervous System -- Brain Power
S7-27 Nervous System -- Is It Magic?
S7-28 Right or Left Brain Dominance?
S7-29 You Have A Lot of Nerve(s)
S7-30 Nervous System -- Test Your Nerves
S7-31 Reproductive System -- Growth and Development
S7-32 Understanding Genetics -- Just By Chance
S7-33 The Endocrine System
S7-34 What is AIDS?
S7-35 Update: Reported Cases of AIDS
S7-36 Review: What a System of Systems

Plants and Ecology

S7-37 The Green Leaf -- Food Factory of the World
S7-38 Understanding Genetics -- Tall or Short Pea Plants
S7-39 Something Wild and Living
S7-40 Biomes on a New Planet -- It's a What?

APPENDIX B2

S6-11

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

LIVING IN WATER -- THE SLIMY PROBLEM

Dear Parent or Guardian,

We are learning about water pollution. This activity will help build science skills in making predictions, creative problem solving, and analyzing results. I hope you enjoy this activity with me. This assignment is due _____.

Sincerely,

_____

OBJECTIVE: To design a procedure for effectively removing oil from water.

MATERIALS: 1/4 cup oil (cooking, motor, salad, or machine oil) pen or pencil
container large enough to hold at least 3 cups of water
household materials -- paper towels, napkins, sponge, spoon, straw

PROCEDURE:

LAB REPORT

1. Choose a Family Assistant and discuss the following together. **Who is your Family Assistant?** _____

   Predict what happens when oil is mixed with water. Write your prediction.

   _____

   _____

2. Fill the container half full with water and add 1/4 cup of oil. **DO NOT stir.** Observe what happens and write your observations.

   What did you **observe** when the oil was poured into the water? _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. Now, try to **remove** the oil from the water. Use any safe household materials, solutions, tools, or utensils. Use one or a combination of these household items to remove the oil from the water. **Check with your Family Assistant to be sure they are safe.**

4. Write the steps you followed to remove the oil from the water. LIST each attempt you made and what you observed.

What I tried --	**What I observed --**
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

CONCLUSIONS:

1. Discuss with your Family Assistant the steps you followed to remove the oil from the water.

2. Together, list any problems you had in trying to remove the oil from the water.

_____

_____

_____

3. Discuss with your Family Assistant how your experiment was similar to oil spills that occur when tankers are damaged and spill oil into the ocean. Write your ideas in clear sentences.

_____

_____

_____

HOME-TO-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION:

Dear Parent,

Please give me your reactions to your child's work on this activity. Write YES or NO for each statement.

_____ 1. My child understood the homework and was able to discuss it.

_____ 2. My child and I enjoyed the activity.

_____ 3. This assignment helped me know what my child is learning in science.

Any other comments: _____

Parent Signature _____

Name: _____ Class:_____ Date: _____

HEALTH EDUCATION -- ALL ABOUT ME

Dear Parent or Guardian,

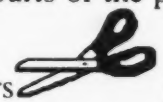
We are learning to identify factors that help shape our self-concept. This activity will help develop health awareness skills in analyzing and communicating ideas. I hope you enjoy this activity with me. This assignment is due _____.

Sincerely,

_____

OBJECTIVES:

1. To develop a self-descriptive profile.
2. To analyze and discuss ways of changing parts of the profile.

MATERIALS: magazines glue scissors  paper

PROCEDURE:

Read and discuss the following definitions of self-concept with your family member.

Self-concept: how you see yourself or feel about yourself.
Positive self-concept: to feel good about yourself.
Negative self-concept: to feel bad about yourself.

Finish these sentences as quickly as possible. Write the first thing that you think of.

All About Me

1. I am a person who likes _____.
2. I am a person who can _____.
3. I am a person who has _____.
4. I am a person who hates _____.
5. I am a person who always _____.
6. I am a person who never _____.
7. I am a person who should _____.
8. I am a person who wants _____.
9. I am a person who wishes _____.
10. I am a person who would rather _____.

Put a check (✓) next to the <u>three</u> sentences that make you feel most proud. Put an X next to the sentences that you would <u>most</u> like to change.

DISCUSSION:
Discuss the following questions with your family member. Write complete sentences. **Who is assisting you?** _____

1. Of all of the descriptions about yourself, which one makes you most proud? ___

_____

2. Which one would you most like to change? _____

_____

3. List at least three ways that you might change this. Write your own ideas or get some help from your family member.

a. _____

_____

_____

b. _____

_____

_____

c. _____

_____

_____

NOW TRY THIS! Make a collage by cutting pictures and words out of magazines and newspapers that describe YOU. Ask your family member to help you locate words or pictures. Paste them on a piece of paper for display in the classroom. Bring your collage with this assignment when it is due.

Remember! Try to show things about yourself: likes, dislikes, hobbies, sports, etc.

HOME-TO-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION:

Dear Parent, Please give me your reactions to your child's work on this activity. Write YES or NO for each statement.

_____ 1. My child understood the homework and was able to discuss it.
_____ 2. My child and I enjoyed the activity.
_____ 3. This assignment helped me know what my child is learning in health.

Any other comments: _____

_____

Parent Signature _____

Name:_____Class:_____Date:_____

OSMOSIS

Dear Parent or Guardian,

In school this week we are studying a process that is called osmosis. This activity will demonstrate osmosis. I hope you enjoy this activity with me. This assignment is due _____.

Sincerely,

_____

OBJECTIVE: To observe osmosis and answer questions based on the observations.

NOTE: THIS ACTIVITY REQUIRES AT LEAST 5 DAYS TO COMPLETE.

MATERIALS: 1 raw egg in its uncracked shell, 1 cup of vinegar, one clean jar with a lid, pencil or pen

PROCEDURE:

1. Make sure that the jar and lid that you use are clean.
2. Pour about a cup of vinegar into the jar.
3. Place the raw egg gently into the jar without breaking or cracking the shell. Put the lid on the jar **loosely.** Let it sit for two or three days. **The shell will become soft and the egg will become rubbery. You may touch it VERY GENTLY but do not break the shell at this time.**
4. Let the egg continue to sit in the vinegar. Ask a family member to make observations with you every day and see if you both observe the same things. **Who is working with you?** _____

Write your observations each day for five days on the Lab Report.

LAB REPORT

DAY	OBSERVATIONS
1	Egg is placed in vinegar in a jar with lid loosely closed

CONCLUSIONS:
Discuss these questions with your family member and then answer in sentences.

1. What did you notice about the size of the egg the longer it remained in the vinegar?

_____

_____

2. What caused this change to take place?

_____

_____

3. Explain **osmosis** in terms of what you saw happen to the egg._____

_____

_____

Read these questions and answers aloud to your family member. Fix any that are unclear

NOW TRY THIS!
How could you **prove** that the vinegar went inside the egg?_____

_____

_____

The egg is similar to a cell. Osmosis occurs in a cell the same way it occurred in the egg. Draw a diagram of the egg and of a cell.

Locate the "**membrane**" or "**cell wall**" in both diagrams. Label them.
Use arrows to show how vinegar enters an egg and how liquids enter a cell.

Egg **Cell**

HOME TO SCHOOL COMMUNICATION:
Dear Parent,

Please give me your reactions to your child's work on this activity.
Write yes or no for each statement.

_____ 1. My child understood the homework and was able to discuss it.
_____ 2. My child and I enjoyed the activity.
_____ 3. This assignment helped me know what my child is learning in science.

Any other comments:_____

_____

Parent's Signature:_____

Name:_____Class:_____Date:_____

IDENTIFYING ORGAN SYSTEMS

Dear Parent or Guardian,

We are studying the organ systems of the body. This activity will help identify the different systems found in our bodies. I hope you enjoy this activity with me..
This activity is due _____.

Sincerely,

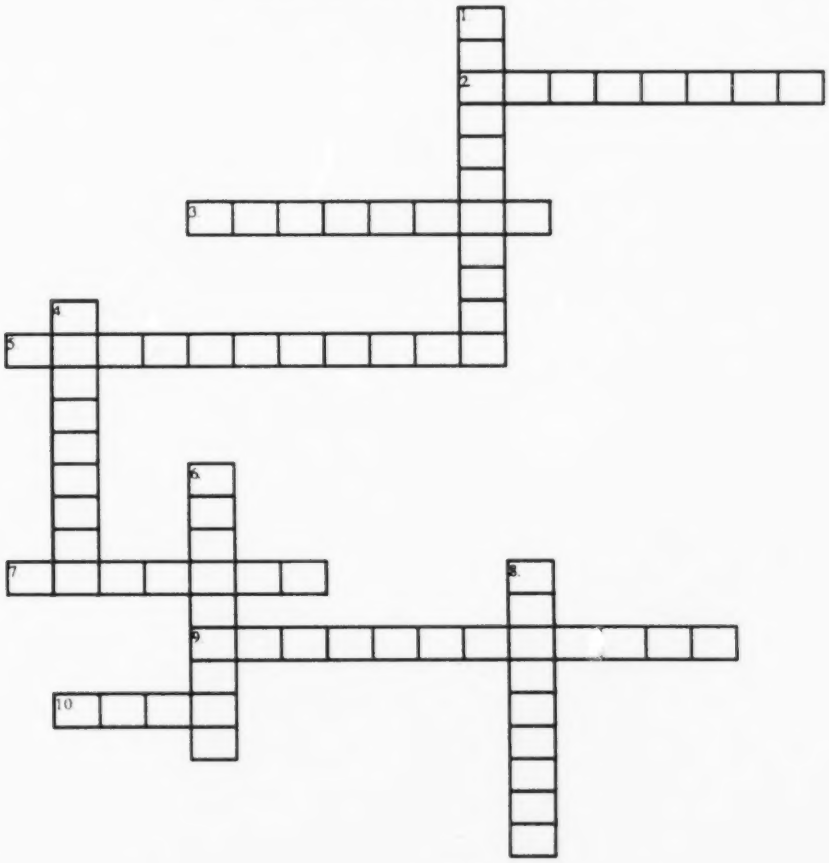
_____

OBJECTIVE: To match the various organ systems with their functions.

CIRCULATORY -- + --

PROCEDURE:
Complete this crossword puzzle. **Use the clues on the next page.** All of the answers that fit into the blanks are names of organ systems.

WHICH SYSTEM IS IT?



Across:

2. Protects the body with bone covering.
3. Supports the body and enables it to move.
5. Transports oxygen, wastes, and digested food throughout the body.
7. Conducts messages throughout the body to assist the coordination of body functions.
9. Produces male and female sex cells.
10. Protects the body by covering it.

Down:

1. Permits the exchange of gases -- such as oxygen and carbon dioxide -- in the body.
4. Receives, transports, breaks down, and absorbs food throughout the body.
6. Produces chemicals that regulate various body functions.
8. Removes liquid and solid waste from the body.

Use the clues and your answers to explain to your family member what each of the organ systems does for the body.

TRY THIS:

Name an organ found in each of the organ systems that you named in the puzzle.(Example: **Circulatory -- heart**)

1. **Skeletal** _____
2. **Muscular** _____
3. **Skin** _____
4. **Digestive** _____
5. **Circulatory** _____
6. **Respiratory** _____
7. **Excretory** _____
8. **Endocrine** _____
9. **Nervous** _____
10. **Reproductive** _____

Family Interview:
Who are you interviewing?

_____

Ask a parent for one piece of advice on how to keep this system healthy.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

HOME TO SCHOOL COMMUNICATION:

Dear Parent,

Please give me your reactions to your child's work on this activity.

Write yes or no for each statement.

_____ 1. My child understood the homework and was able to discuss it.
_____ 2. My child and I enjoyed the activity.
_____ 3. This assignment helped me to know what my child is learning in science.

Any other comments:_____

_____

Parent's Signature:_____

APPENDIX B3

Student's Name: _____ Date: _____

(TITLE)

Dear Parent or Guardian,

We are learning to _____. This activity will help build science skills in _____. I hope you enjoy this activity with me. This assignment is due _____.

Sincerely,

_____

OBJECTIVE:

MATERIALS:

PROCEDURE:

(Include various interactions with family. See samples in this manual and prototype activities.)

LAB REPORT
or
DATA CHART

CONCLUSIONS (or **DISCUSSION**):

(Include various interactions with family. See samples in this manual and prototype activities.)

HOME-TO-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION:

Dear Parent,

Please give me your reactions to your child's work on this activity.
Write YES or NO for each statement.

_____ 1. My child understood the homework and was able to discuss it.

_____ 2. My child and I enjoyed the activity.

_____ 3. This assignment helped me know what my child is learning in science.

Any other comments: _____

Parent Signature _____

APPENDIX C

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH RESULTS

For over a decade we have been studying how teachers' practices of involving parents in learning activities at home affect teachers, parents, and children in the elementary and middle grades. Many reports are available on the five major types of involvement; teacher and parent evaluations of parent involvement in general and specific practices; single parents' experiences with parent involvement; teachers' evaluations of the quality of assistance from parents and the quality of children's homework; implications of the research findings for teachers' roles and responsibilities and for administrators' policies; and results of parent involvement on students' attitudes and achievements.

Our studies show that **teachers** in the elementary and middle grades can implement good practices to involve parents in learning activities with their children. Teachers who actively and frequently use parent involvement include parents with all educational backgrounds, not only well-educated parents. These teachers show more appreciation of parents and report more cooperation from parents (including single parents and parents with less formal education).

Elementary grades teachers who frequently use parent involvement in learning activities at home give the parents significantly higher ratings on the quality of help and follow-through at home. Middle grades teachers who systematically involve families begin to see more parents as allies -- interested in their children and in the schools.

Parents who receive frequent requests for involvement from teachers report that they learn more about the school program, recognize and appreciate the teachers' efforts, obtain ideas about how to help at home, and rate the teachers higher in interpersonal skills and overall teaching quality.

Of all the types of involvement, most parents (over 90%) want to know "How do I help my child at home?" When given this information, more parents of elementary and middle grades students become involved who were not involved before. They become more positive about the school, the teacher, and their continuing role in their children's education. Parents write notes of "thanks" and "send more" to teachers and many other comments to express their interest in receiving guidance about how to interact with their children on schoolwork at home.

Students' reading achievement in the elementary grades improves from fall to spring if their teachers are leaders in the use of parent involvement. Fifth grade students have better attitudes toward school, see home and school as more similar, and do more work on weekends when their teachers frequently use parent involvement practices. Middle grades students report that they learn things about their parents they would not have known without the assignments that require and guide interaction at home. Student and parent communications increase about school, schoolwork, and homework.

The studies reveal important **subject-specific connections** between teachers' practices, principals' influence, parents' responses, and students' achievement:

- 2/3 of all elementary **teachers**, and over 90% of first grade teachers, involved parents in **reading** activities with their children at home.

- About 75% of the **principals** said they encourage teachers to involve parents in **reading** activities at home.

- Over one-half of all **parents**, and over 70% of parents whose children were in the classroom of teachers who are leaders in the use of parent involvement, conducted **reading** or reading-related skills at home with their children.

- Elementary grades **students** in the classrooms of teachers who frequently use parent involvement made greater improvement in their reading skills (but not math skills) than did students in other teachers' classrooms.

Middle grades students with marginal language arts skills in the spring did better on selected skills in the fall if they completed home learning activities during the summer.

Students in the elementary and middle grades tend to complete TIPS homework even more than other homework, according to teachers' reports.

These subject-specific ties suggest that students' achievement is helped when teachers guide parents in supervising and discussing specific learning activities with their children at home. These results influenced the design of TIPS in specific subjects.

Research suggests that parent involvement is largely an organizational problem for teachers. Almost all teachers believe parent involvement is important, but to put it in practice teachers need clear, quick, and reliable ways to (a) distribute learning activities that can be completed and shared at home, (b) receive and process messages from parents about the activities, and (c) evaluate the success of their parent involvement practices.

The TIPS process and prototype activities address these requirements. The short, easy-to-distribute activities are coordinated with the teacher's curriculum to focus on specific skills needed by students at each grade level. The homework assignments include communications from home-to-school.

Research shows that through the middle grades parents appreciate teachers' efforts to help them interact with their children about schoolwork at home. Some teachers do this often. With the TIPS process, more teachers can.

Selected Research Studies and Summaries

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